

Claims 1-15 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kobayashi (U.S. Patent No. 6,275,825) in view of Jacobs (U.S. Patent No. 5,694,595). Applicant submits the following in traversal of the rejection.

The Examiner has failed to respond to each of Applicant's arguments raised in the Amendment filed September 22, 2003. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the finality of the present Office Action be withdrawn, and that the Examiner respond to each of Applicant's arguments in order to enhance clarification of the prosecution history record. MPEP 707.07(f) (The Examiner *must*, however, address *any* argument presented by the Applicants...). In particular, the Examiner maintains the same rejections with respect to claims 1 and 4, however, the Examiner has not established where the claimed reservation number is taught in the prior art. Furthermore, the Examiner did not respond to Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 2 and 3.

In response to Applicants previously submitted arguments, the Examiner states that Kobayashi teaches setting up processing conditions for retrieval processing in accordance with a retrieval request. The Examiner also states that Kobayashi teaches issuing a reservation number of the retrieval processing and informing the user of the reservation number and applying the reservation number to the processing conditions and registering the same with a predetermined retrieval management table.

The Examiner states that the login name of a user who requests access to a system, is input to the system. This appears to be cited for teaching a retrieval request. The user DB access right file UAF is retrieved on the basis of the input login name and the login name is converted

into the login name of the employee information file DB. Col. 10, lines 16-24. This appears to be cited for teaching setting up processing conditions for retrieval processing in accordance with a retrieval request.

The Examiner then states that in col. 5, lines 9-15 that Kobayashi teaches a "File" which defines the database name "personnel" and the file name "employee information" and that "Field" defines the item name "employee No." of the employee information file DB, which allows retrieval of the item "employee No." of the employee information file (DB) using the item "user No." of the login management information file (LMF) as a retrieval key.

→ If the Examiner is arguing that the converted login name is an issued reservation number, at no point is the user of Kobayashi informed of the converted login name. The user login is converted to ease system control of information and is used to determine what information is accessible by a user. Therefore, while the converted login name is applied for internal system use, the system does not further inform the user of this information. For example, when a user inputs a login name of "tuzaki" the login name is converted to "A-1" which represents that the user belongs to the user group "Department Manager" and the corresponding files available for a Department Manager to view, are obtained. Column 10, lines 20-21, Fig. 3A2. Furthermore, the user is never informed of the converted information.

Moreover, a login name is unique for one user whereas more than one "reservation number" can be issued for one user. Therefore, a login name is not a reservation number.

Claims 1 and 4 further describe applying the reservation number to the processing conditions and registering the reservation number with a predetermined management table. As previously indicated, the employee No. is part of an employee's personnel information which is

stored in a database. When a user logs into a system and enters a password, the personnel information can be provided to the user. The employee No. is not applied to the processing conditions (converting a login name to the login name of the employee information file DB as cited by Examiner) and *registered* with a predetermined management table.

Claims 1 and 4 further describe that the retrieval result providing means retrieves a result associated with the reservation number from among the retrieval results stored in the retrieval *results storage file*.

The Examiner states that a retrieval result providing means is taught in Kobayashi and maintains the same arguments indicated in the previous Office Action. Additionally, the Examiner states that Kobayashi col. 10, lines 16-21 teaches that the input login name is converted into the login name of the employee information file.

However, it is unclear what aspect is being cited for teaching a result storage file since Jacobs was cited for teaching this aspect of the claims. The rejection as stated includes several ambiguities that cannot support the rejection. Furthermore, a result is not retrieved according to a reservation number (employee No.) which was issued by the retrieval processing. A result is retrieved according to a login name, while an employee No. is stored in a database and can be viewed by a user.

Assuming the Examiner is arguing that the login name teaches the claimed reservation number, the login name is not issued according to a retrieval processing, nor does a device inform a user of the login name.

The Examiner states that Kobayashi does not explicitly indicate a retrieval request receiving means for receiving a retrieval request of contents on a communication network from a

user accessing through the communication network and contents retrieval means for retrieving the contents on the communication network in accordance with the processing conditions registered with the retrieval management table and storing the retrieval result, as further described in claims 1 and 4, and cites Jacobs to cure the deficiency.

The Examiner states that Jacobs implicitly indicates authorization checking by means of a logon facility and administration of user ID 's and passwords, citing col. 4, lines 41-51. The Examiner then states it would be obvious to combine the teaching of Kobayashi and Jacobs with a retrieval request of contents on a communication network and a contents retrieval means.

- As indicated in the previously filed amendment, the respective column and lines cited by the Examiner disclose a UPM security system which requires a logon ID and password before a user can access a system. A UPM is used to define a user logon profile which store information enabling user's logon to remote systems. It appears that the Examiner is referring to a user logon profile for teaching contents on a communication network registered with a retrieval management table. However, there would be absolutely no reason why the user logon profile (containing a logon ID and password) would be stored with the reservation number (converted logon ID of Kobayashi) in a predetermined retrieval storage file. In particular, it is unclear why based on a logon ID (reservation number of Kobayashi), a user would request a user ID (retrieval result of Jacobs). Therefore, Jacobs does not teach the contents retrieval means of claim 1.

In response to Applicant's previously submitted argument, the Examiner states that one cannot show non-obviousness by attacking the references individually. However, Applicant respectfully brings to the Examiner's attention that Applicant was merely establishing why

Jacobs does not teach the claimed contents retrieval means. Furthermore, Applicant has established the non-obviousness of the combination of Kobayashi and Jacobs.

The Examiner also states that the claims do not capture the essence of the invention as argued by Applicant and that the Applicant is narrowing the scope of the claim using the specification. It is unclear what aspect of page 12 the Examiner is referring to, however, Applicant submits that Applicant's arguments were based on the claim language.

In claim 1, the user is informed of the reservation number and an inquiry concerning a retrieval result made based on the reservation number. None of the aspects of Kobayashi, such as the "File" or the "Field", as cited by the Examiner, include these characteristics in combination.

Kobayashi pertains to the method for authorization of a user and the system to set user access right. Jacobs pertains to a system for administering user profiles in a network. Kobayashi and Jacobs do not explicitly or implicitly disclose issuing a reservation number for the retrieval processing conditions and provision of retrieval result based on the reservation number cited by the present invention.

Furthermore, the cited prior art does not pertain to shortening a queue (wait) time required for obtaining a retrieval result, as described in an embodiment of the present invention. See specification, p. 2, 1st paragraph - 3rd paragraph. For example, the present invention is focused on providing a retrieval result without a long queue time based on the reservation number for the retrieval processing conditions, after the stage of a user access right or security matters. The effects are achieved through the structure as described in the claims. Since the cited combination lacks these structures, the attendant effects are also not realized.

Since the Examiner has failed to establish the elements and the interrelationships between the elements, claims 1 and 4 and their dependent claims should be deemed patentable. Further, Applicant maintains the previously submitted arguments to which the Examiner has not responded.

Claim 2

As indicated in the previously filed amendment, the Examiner initially maintained that Kobayashi lacks a contents retrieval means as described in claim 1 and now cites Kobayashi for teaching the contents retrieval means of claim 2. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner clarify this inconsistency. Regardless, neither Kobayashi nor Jacobs discloses the elements of claim 2.

Applicant previously indicated that the respective column and lines (col. 4, lines 26-30) of Kobayashi cited by the Examiner describes an access right setting table form to be displayed and output in setting/changing an access right of the employee information file DB in accordance with a user attribute in units of user groups. The access information does not relate to display of a retrieval result. It is unclear where thumb-nail images, let alone displaying retrieving results in the form of a thumb-nail is at all disclosed in the column and lines cited by the Examiner.

Assuming *arguendo*, the Examiner meant to cite Jacobs for teaching that the contents retrieval means of claim 2, there is absolutely no indication throughout the reference that thumb-nail images are created, let alone an image storage file for storing the thumb-nail images.

For the above reasons, claim 2 should be deemed patentable.

Claim 3

The Examiner maintains that Kobayashi in combination with Jacobs teaches the elements of claim 3. Claim 3 describes that the retrieval request receiving means sets up as to whether there is a need to inform a user by electronic mail that a retrieval result is obtained. There is absolutely no indication throughout either Kobayashi or Jacobs that electronic mail is sent to a user.

The Examiner reasons that since Kobayashi discloses file sharing, distributed applications and databases and other services, that it also discloses informing a user through electronic mail. There is absolutely no indication in Jacobs that a user is informed of a result of a request through electronic mail. The Examiner is making assumptions about a reference, when there is no evidence that the reference discloses such elements.

Therefore, claim 3 should be deemed patentable.

Claims 5

The Examiner states that claim 5 is rejected on the same basis as claim 1. However, claim 5 describes establishing a connection to the network at a first log on when the retrieval request is made and establishing a connection to the network at a second log on when the retrieval result providing means provides the retrieval result based on the reservation number, which is not described in claim 1.

Since the Examiner has not established where the aspect of claim 5 are taught in the prior art, for at least this reason, claim 5 should be deemed patentable or the finality of the present Office Action should be withdrawn.

Furthermore, at no point do the prior art distinguish between a first log on and a second log on. In Kobayashi, there is one log on during which the login name of the user is converted into the login name of the employee information file in order to access a system. Col. 10, lines 16-24. In Jacobs, there is a single log on during which a user ID and password are entered in order to access a system. Col. 1, lines 20-25. Since the first and second log on of claim 5 are not taught in the prior art, claim 5 should be deemed patentable.

Claim 6

Claim 6 describes that the system comprises a service menu wherein the user is prompted to select between retrieving new information or referring to a past retrieval as the retrieval request. The Examiner cites Kobayashi col. 10, lines 16-21 for teaching the elements of claim 6.

The respective column and lines cited by the Examiner describes that when the login name of a user who requested an access is input to the system, the user DB access right file UAF is retrieved on the basis of the input login name. The input login name is converted into the login name of the employee information file DB.

There is no indication of a service menu nor is there any indication that a user is prompted between retrieving *new* information or referring to a *past* retrieval request. When a user accesses the database of Kobayashi, it appears that each retrieval is new. Therefore, claim 6 should be deemed patentable.

Claim 7

The Examiner states that claim 7 is rejected on the same basis as claim 1. However, claim 7 describes that a user is prompted for a password and the reservation number when an inquiry concerning the retrieval result is made, which is not described in claim 1.

Regardless, a user is prompted for a password and login ID when trying to access the system of Kobayashi. There is no indication that the user is prompted for a password and reservation number when making an *inquiry concerning* a retrieval result. In particular, it does not appear that a user can make an inquiry concerning a retrieval result in Kobayashi since the retrieval result (access to database) appears to be immediately available to the user upon entering their logon ID and password. Therefore, claim 7 should be deemed patentable.

Claim 8

The Examiner states that claim 8 is rejected on the same basis as claim 1. However, claim 8 describes that the reservation number *is initially* registered with the predetermined retrieval management table at the time of the retrieval request.

In Kobayashi, the information is personnel information which have previously been entered into the database. Therefore, when a user enters their logon ID, the information to which they have access such as the employee No., will be made available to them. Therefore, the employee number is not *initially* registered with the predetermined management table *at the time* of the retrieval request.

If the Examiner is arguing the that login ID is the reservation number, it is apparent that the login ID is not initially registered at the time of the retrieval request. In particular, if the login ID has not been previously registered, then the user will not be able to access the system. For the above reasons, claim 8 should be deemed patentable.

Claim 9

The Examiner states that claim 9 is rejected on the same basis as claim 1. However, claim 9 describes that the reservation number is unique to each retrieval request.

Assuming the Examiner is citing the login ID for teaching the reservation number, it is apparent that a user is assigned a login ID and that the login ID is not modified every time a user accesses the database. See abstract.

Assuming the Examiner is citing the employee No. for teaching the reservation number, it is apparent that the employee No. is not dependent on a retrieval request, but is a number associated with an employee. See Fig. 5.

For the above reasons, claim 9 should be deemed patentable.

Claim 11

Claim 11 describes a plurality of retrieval result storage files wherein one of the plurality of retrieval results storage files is created for each retrieval request.

The Examiner states the Kobayashi col. 4, lines 16-30 teaches the elements of claim 11. The respective column and lines cited by the Examiner describes that when a user requests data matching a predetermined condition, an application program received the retrieval request and generates an SQL statement. The SQL statement is sent to a relational database which analyzes the statement and accesses an employee information file. An access right setting table form represents table form information to be displayed and output in setting/changing an access right of the employee information file in accordance with a user attribute in units of user groups.

The respective column and lines cited by the Examiner merely describes the operations performed when a user accesses a database. There is no indication of a plurality of *result storage* files nor is there any indication that a result storage file is created for each retrieval request. Therefore, claim 11 should be deemed patentable.

Claim 12

The Examiner states that claim 12 is rejected on the same basis as claim 1. However, claim 12 describes that the contents retrieval means executes retrieval regardless of the state of user network connection to the contents retrieval means, which is not described in claim 1.

Since the Examiner has not established where the elements of claim 12 are taught in the prior art, for at least this reason, claim 12 should be deemed patentable.

Regardless, there is no indication in the prior art that the system of Jacobs (contents retrieval means as cited by Examiner) executes retrieval regardless of a state of user network connection to the contents retrieval means. Therefore, claim 12 should be deemed patentable.

Claim 13

The Examiner states that claim 13 is rejected on the same basis as claim 1. However, claim 13 describes that the communication network comprises an Internet and the contents retrieval means executes retrieval even when the user closes an Internet browser to the Internet, which is not described in claim 1.

Regardless there is no indication of an Internet browser in the cited prior art. therefore, claim 13 should be deemed patentable.

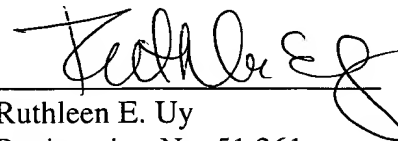
In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
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Respectfully submitted,



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